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ABSTRACT

The TRIO program at the General College, University of Minnesota, is addressed in this newsletter issue, based on presentations made at the 1981 annual meeting of the Mid-American Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel. The name TRIO stands for three federal programs: (1) Upward Bound, which assists high school students from poverty backgrounds with academics; (2) Talent Search, a counseling and information service for low-income, college-bound students; and (3) Special Service for Disadvantaged Students, directed to nontraditional college students and usually including specially staffed programs such as counseling, remedial study, and ethnic identity activities. In "Program Evaluation and Program Description," Sherry Read focuses on the Integrated Course of Study (ICS), a program serving freshmen that includes study skills, career planning, stress management, a writing lab, math courses, and courses in areas such as urban problems and the arts. Student demographic data, placement program scores, and information on indicators of academic success are examined. Terence Collins, in "A Retention-Based Writing Classroom," outlines the goals of writing courses designed to meet special needs of developmental studies students. In "Urban Problems and Writing," Nathan Smith briefly describes the urban problems course and its coupling with the General College Writing Laboratory. In "Survival Seminars," Beverly Stewart describes the two college credit courses that allow students to develop and utilize skills and resources needed for success in a college program. In "The Integrated Course of Study: Its Education Environment," Thomas Skovholt comments about the ICS and the larger educational environment in which it functions. (SW)

general college newsletter

Bruce Hixson, Editor

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THE INTEGRATED COURSE OF STUDY IN THE GENERAL COLLEGE TRIO PROGRAM

Terence Collins, Sherry Read, Thomas Skovholt,
Nathan Smith and Beverly Stewart

The name TRIO stands for three federal programs:

1) Upward Bound, which aids high school students from poverty backgrounds with academic needs,

2) Talent Search, a counseling and information service for low-income students who are college bound, and

3) Special Services, for non-traditional college students, usually including specially staffed programs such as counseling, remedial study and ethnic identity activities.

This edition of Newsletter provides an overview of presentations made at the Seventh Annual Conference of the Mid-American Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel at Fontana, Wisconsin November 8-11, 1981. Sherry Read, the GC TRIO program Evaluator, presented aspects of the program evaluation and program description. Following Ms. Read's article are abstracts of presentations made by Terence Collins about a retention-based writing classroom, Nathan Smith about urban problems and writing, and Beverly Stewart about survival seminars. Thomas Skovholt, the TRIO Special Services Program Coordinator, authored the final companion article for this edition of Newsletter in which he offers observations about the Integrated Course of Study and the larger educational environment that it functions within.

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PROGRAM EVALUATION AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

by

Sherry Read

The TRIO/Special Services Program's goal is to provide services which help to prevent non-traditional freshmen from becoming victims of the "revolving door" syndrome; that is, entering and leaving college before achieving any success in higher education.

The focus of this report is the Integrated Course of Study, a program component serving 65-70 students each quarter for the entire freshman year.

The Integrated Course of Study (ICS) is a group of courses taught by General College faculty and counselors designed to be taken concurrently. These courses include a Survival Seminar course, which concentrates on study skills, career planning, and stress management; a writing lab; math courses; and courses in areas such as urban problems, science, the arts, and psychology. Educational counseling and tutoring are also provided for all ICS students.

The primary advantage of the ICS program is that the content courses and Survival Seminars are taught on a cooperative basis. Assignments given in content courses such as Urban Problems may also be evaluated for credit with different criteria by instructors of writing labs and Survival Seminars. The faculty and counselors responsible for these classes hold regular staff meetings to coordinate the program and solve any problems which may arise.

Student Demographic Profile

At the beginning of fall quarter 1980, ICS students (N = 59) were asked to complete the General College Student Demographic Survey as a part of the regular GC orientation. At that time, only 27 students (54%) completed the survey. A follow-up survey was conducted at the end of spring quarter 1981, and a total response rate of 73% was obtained (i.e., a total percent of students who completed either the fall or spring survey). Using these data, a demographic profile of ICS students was constructed.

This profile shows that the majority of ICS students were:

- --female (80%)
- --older than average (mean age = 25.02)
- --white (54%)
- --receiving financial aid (91%)
- -- out of school for more than one year prior to enrolling in GC (77%) with:
  - --57% out of school $\geq$ 3 years,
  - --37% out of school $\geq$ 6 years, and
  - --15% out of school $\geq$ 10 years prior to enrolling in GC.

Sherry Read is the TRIO Program Evaluator.

As a part of General College freshman orientation, new students were also asked to participate in the General College Placement Program (GCPP), which is a battery of basic skills tests in reading, written English expression, and mathematics used to aid in academic advising and course placement.

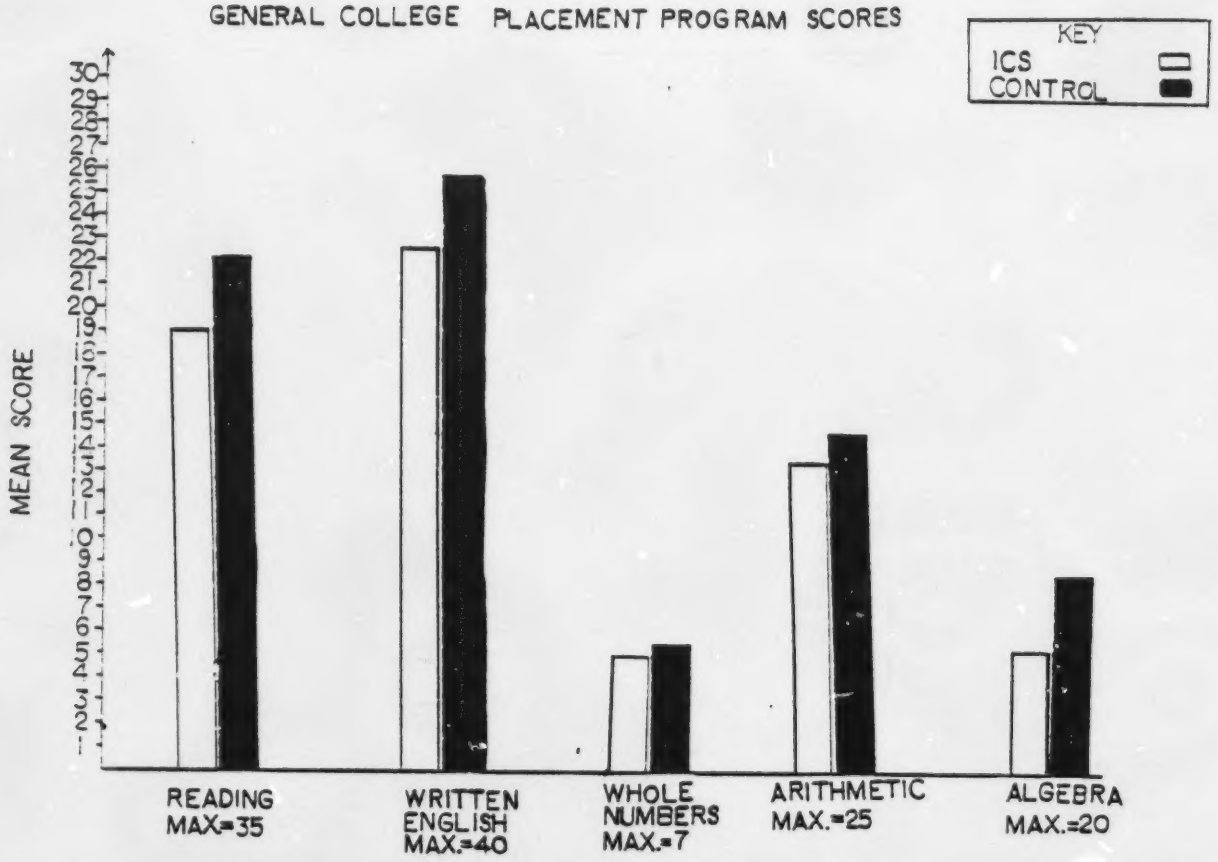
The scores of ICS students were compared to a control group of low income students who did not receive special services. The ICS students scored lower than the control group on every subtest (see Table I and Figure I).

Table I
General College Placement Program Scores

	ICS (N = 51)		Control Group (N = 55)	
	Mean Score	GC Percentile*	Mean Score	GC Percentile*
Reading (maximum score = 35)	19.00	32nd	22.02	46th
Written English Expression (maximum score = 40)	22.41	26th	25.73	51st
Whole Numbers (maximum score = 7)	5.08	24th	5.27	24th
Arithmetic (maximum score = 25)	13.36	30th	14.85	44th
Algebra (maximum score = 20)	5.10	Not Available	8.62	Not Available

*percentiles from: Brothen, T., et al., Norms for the General College Placement Program. General College Research Reports. University of Minnesota, January, 1981.

FIGURE I
GENERAL COLLEGE PLACEMENT PROGRAM SCORES



The TRIO ICS students can be described, then, as dissimilar in many ways from what are considered typical college freshmen. They are low income students who are older, more likely to be female, have been out of school longer, and who enter school with markedly fewer basic skills at their command. In a very real sense, these differences stack the deck against the ICS students in their bid for higher education.

Program Effectiveness

When evaluating the effectiveness of this program, the primary questions of interest are:

1) Did ICS students stay in school? and
2) Were they successful in school?

To answer these questions, three traditional indicators of academic success are measured; retention rate (proportion of students who re-

mained in school continuously from their entry into the progran to the end of the year), credit completion rate (CCR = proportion of credits completed by each student), and, finally, grade point average (GPA). ICS students are compared to the low income control group described earlier on these three indicators of academic success (see Table II and Figures II and III).

Table II
Indicators of Academic Success

	ICS	Control
Retention rate	.84	.68
Credit completion	.79	.71
Cumulative GPA (N's excluded)	3.11	2.88
Cumulative GPA (N's included with N=0)	2.64	2.48

More ICS students stayed in school than the control group. They also completed a greater proportion of credits and received higher grades than the control group.

FIGURE II
STUDENT RETENTION AND CREDIT COMPLETION

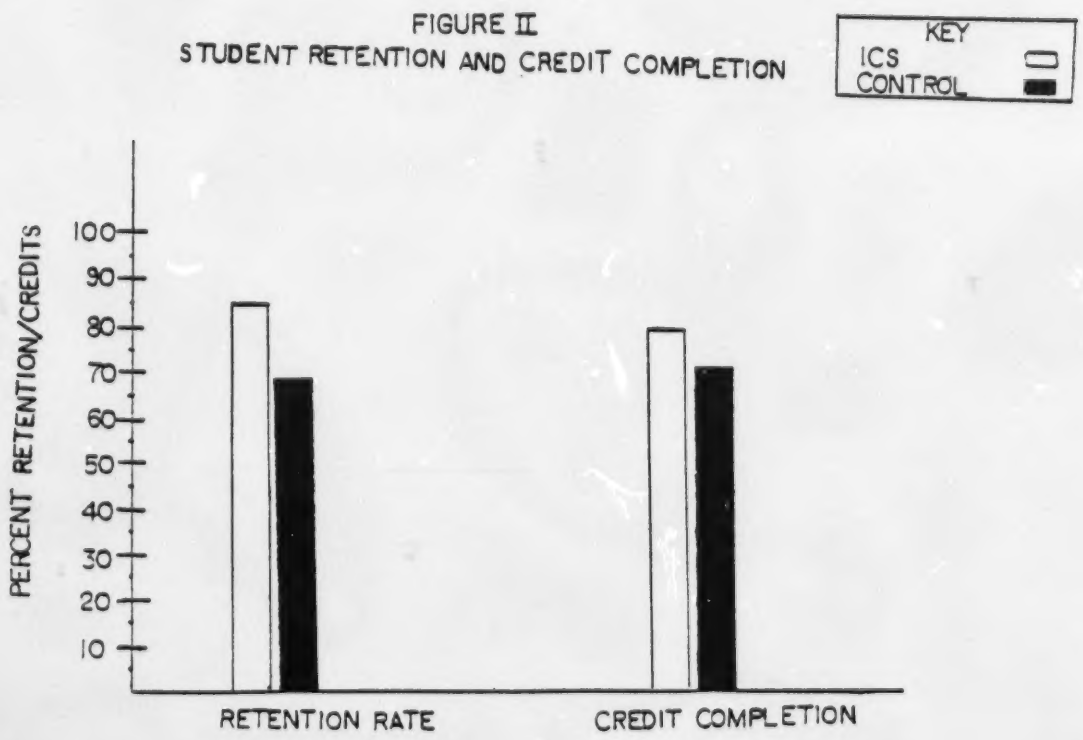
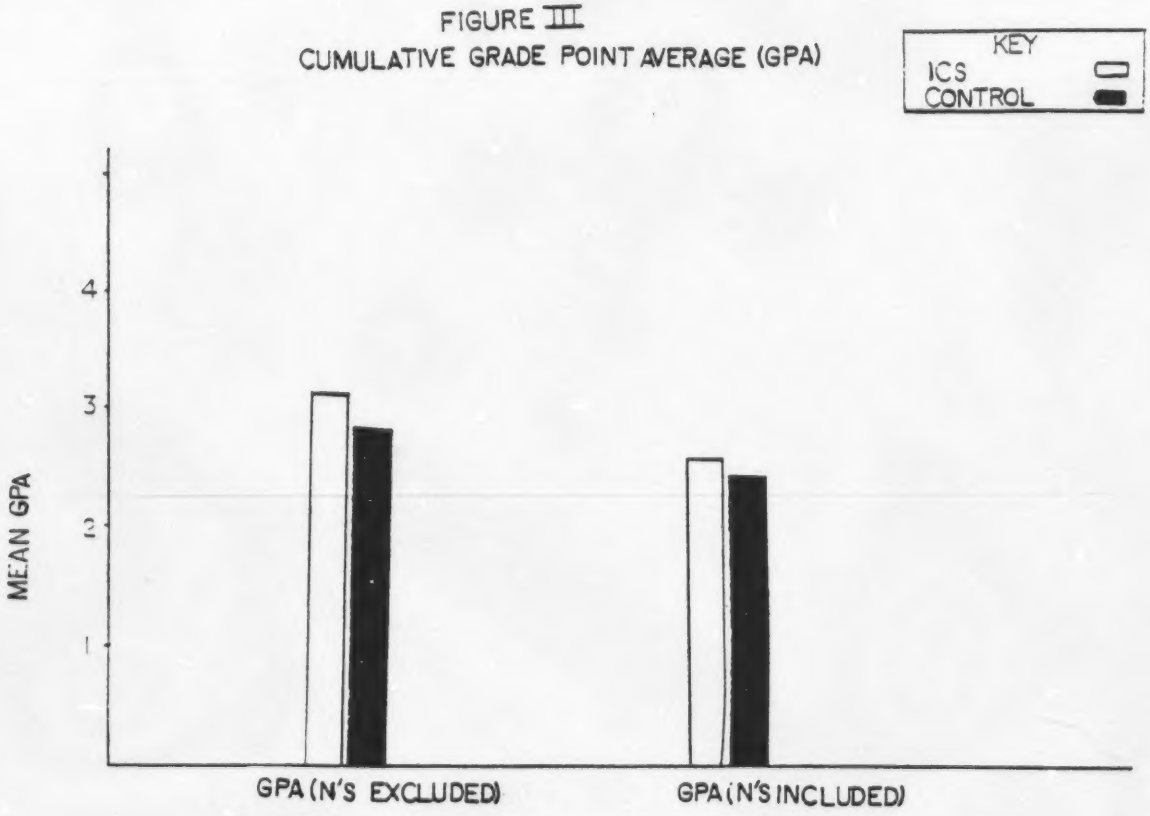


FIGURE III
CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)



Student Self-Esteem

In addition to these standard measures of academic success, ICS students were also compared to the low-income control group on self-esteem, a varible which has often been shown to relate to achievement. The twenty-item Revised Janis-Field feelings on inadequacy scale (Eagly, 1967) was used to measure self-esteem.

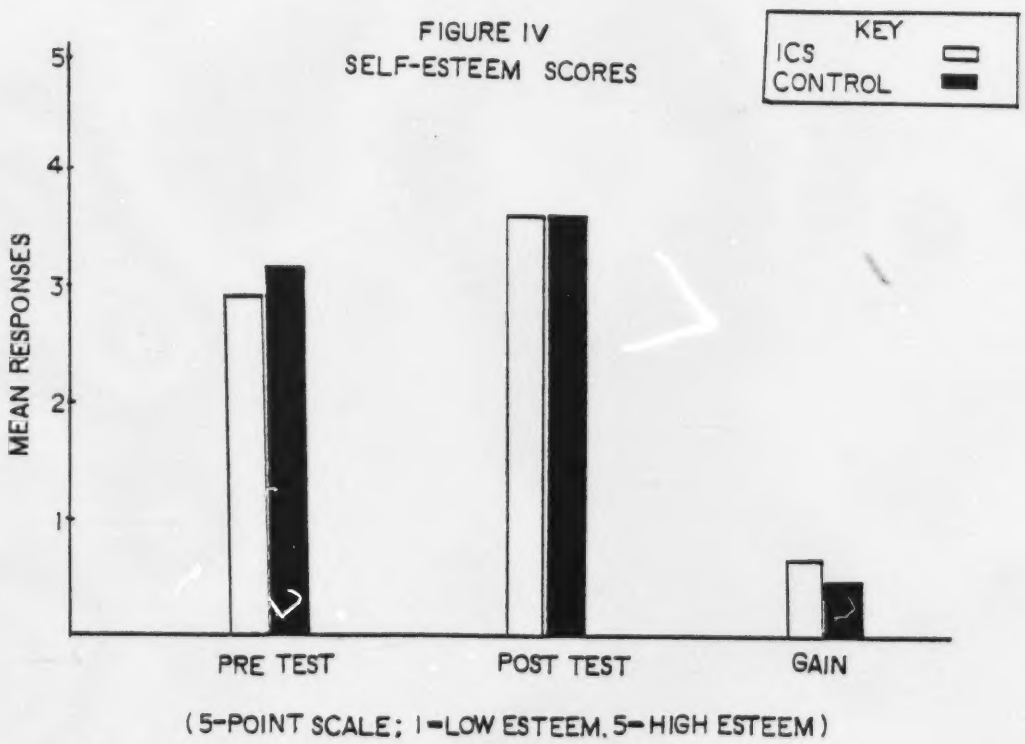
Due to a lack of pre-data on student self-esteem, a retrospective pre/post methodology was utilized by asking students (at the end of the academic year) to respond to each item with their current feelings and as they felt prior to enrollment in college. In this way, a change or gain in self-esteem could be calculated by comparing pre-/post responses.

The results of this investigation are displayed in Table III and Figure IV. ICS students had lower entry level esteem scores, but by the end of the year they had greater gains in self-esteem, making their post scores equal to the control group.

Table III
Self-Esteem Scores

	ICS	Control
Pretest score	2.93	3.16
Post-test score	3.63	3.63
Gain score	.65	.42

(5 point scale, 5 = high esteem, 1 = low esteem)



Student Satisfaction

To give the ICS students an opportunity to personally evaluate the TRIO Program, they were asked to respond to an eleven-item Student Satisfaction Survey. The survey was constructed through staff selection from a pool of terms based on program goals and objectives. Twenty-nine (54%) of the ICS students contacted completed the survey.

To the statement, "Overall, I am satisfied with the TRIO Program," the mean response was 4.22 on a 5-point scale with 5 indicating very strong agreement and 1 indicating strong disagreement. Students also responded favorable to an item asking if they would recommend the program to friends and relatives ($\bar{X}$ = 4.53). The staff was viewed as very supportive and accessible ($\bar{X}$ = 4.64 and 4.27 respectively) by ICS students.

When asked to describe their personal growth as a result of being in the TRIO Program, the respondents felt they were more confident ($\bar{X}$ = 3.85), more strongly motivated ($\bar{X}$ = 3.97), had greater organizational ability ($\bar{X}$ = 4.34), better long range planning skills ($\bar{X}$ = 4.10) and were more aware of University and community resources ($\bar{X}$ = 4.03).

Summary

The TRIO/ICS students entered college with several handicaps to academic success. They had poor basic skills, low income, and were from non-traditional backgrounds. However, a higher percentage of ICS students stayed in school, completing a higher proportion of credits, and maintained a higher GPA than the low-income control group to which they were compared. Finally, the TRIO/ICS students endorsed the program and believed it to be personally beneficial.

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Eagly, Alice H. Sex differences in the relationship between self-esteem and susceptibility to social influence. Journal of Personality, 1969, Vol. 37, 581-591.

A Retention-Based Writing Classroom

by

Terence Collins

Periodically in its fifty-year history, the Writing Laboratory staff in the General College of the University of Minnesota has modified the goals and methods of its basic writing courses to meet special needs of special populations. Recently, in providing adapted versions of such courses for the state-supported Pilot Education Program and the federally-funded TRIO/Special Services Integrated Course of Study (ICS), we have been guided by several key assumptions: First, keeping the structure of the writing laboratory courses was essential--writing workshops, moving from personal writing to more traditional transactional modes with frequent practice and frequent feedback, provided a sound base for working with special students, a base reinforced in recent composition research and literature; second, as has always been the practice in writing lab courses, we would not "teach grammar," even with developmental students, but would rely on whole discourse methods; third, we would integrate writing instruction into the context of subject-area coursework wherever feasible; and finally --and most importantly-- we knew that cultural and racial differences, fear of writing, and low student self-esteem (at least in writing) would be crucial elements in our shaping of a retention-based writing program for special services students.

Perhaps the most significant difference between our regular writing lab course sections and those offered as special sections in retention packages was an intensification of our usual concern that students not be alienated, by their writing instruction, from learning in the University at large. Writing is scary business, frankly. And it's especially scary for special services students, most of whom have either failed academically in the past or have been away from formal education for so long that their school confidence has been undermined. Beyond the now-classic formulation of this lack of self-confidence among writing students in Mina Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations[1], there is ample evidence to suggest that for even skilled writers in the population served by TRIO-like programs, the key issue is self-confidence.[2] Thus informed, we structured the writing component of

1. Oxford University Press, 1976.
2. See John E. Rouche and Jerry J. Snow, Overcoming Learning Problems (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), p. 117; Donald H. Blocker and Rita S. Rapoza, "Professional and Vocational Preparation," in Arthur W. Chickering and Associates, The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), pp. 217-220 especially.

Terence Collins is an Associate Professor in the Arts, Communcation, Philosophy Division in the General College, University of Minnesota.

the ICS, as we had similar Pilot Education Program writing courses earlier, to help meet the twin goals of increased writing ability and increased self-confidence.

Naturally, in a writing classroom, building confidence goes hand in hand with student success in writing. But success comes only gradually, and many intermediate steps can help spell success or failure for the fearful student. Such steps help determine the structure of the writing classroom aimed toward increasing overall retention. Given our population, we had to make a basic organizational choice: Should we segregate out those students whose histories and test scores showed that they needed developmental work: Or should we keep them in the regular writing classroom with their better prepared peers? We knew that isolation and its attendant negative affect prove defeating for such students.[1] While General College has a good skills center which handles large numbers of students remarkably efficiently, we chose not to risk exacerbating student loneliness by setting up skills center tutorial developmental courses in place of the ICS writing workshop courses, assuming that thus to isolate developmental students would have labeled them unnecessarily in the eyes of their peers or perhaps would have rubbed their noses in their own histories. Instead, we sought to create a nurturing writing classroom in which students would be helped to form networks of support which would allow them to risk false starts, second tries, and dead ends, and even to fail securely and to learn from such failure. This set of considerations led us to our first structural change: We ran three concurrent workshops in the same room at the same time, offering three different courses at different levels with three different course numbers under the same instructor. Students registered in that course of the three which was most appropriate to their skills at entry, but stayed in the same concurrent workshop as their peers. The nature of the writing lab method made this possible, focusing as it does on student-centered as opposed to teacher-initiated tasks. Since we relied heavily on peer work groups that crossed course boundaries (not unlike a one-room schoolhouse, perhaps), the three-in-one workshops fostered the nurturing support network we sought in all courses in the integrated package. The more talented--but no less fearful--students worked with their less skilled peers (formally at first, and more spontaneously a few weeks into the school year), reinforcing their own growing sense of confidence while at the same time cementing friendships that developed naturally in the package. And the developmental students got the attention they needed, without losing the support of the ICS group.

More needs to be said about setting up the writing classroom to promote such networking. Students in the program were fearful and isolated at the start of the program. Unlike their fellow commuter students on the mammoth Twin Cities campus of the University, they did not as a rule know large numbers of other students from high school, nor did they frequently develop friendships through such normal means as carpools or campus activities.

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1. Jacqueline Fleming, "Special Needs of Blacks and Other Minorities," in Chickering, pp. 279-295.

The primary responsibility for attending to the social side of adjusting to the University fell to the Survival Seminar instructors, but all parts of the ICS package worked to promote the interdependence that gave the students an emotional investment in the University setting. By de-emphasizing isolated, individual, competitive work and products we hoped to bolster friendships and true interdependence. Since the writing classroom is perhaps the most fearful place for special services students when they first return to school, it seemed to us a logical place to work on building peer group support networks.[1]

The second major structural adaptation of writing laboratory courses in the ICS was closely related to the first. In all writing workshops, students were encouraged to work on papers they were writing in their other courses, from Urban Problems (where a ten page research paper scared the pants off everyone) to Career Planning (where narrative self-inventories were a bit more comfortable) to College Science (where, by Spring Quarter, the research paper didn't seem quite so scary). There is a large and credible body of literature which underscores the soundness of such an adaptation through "writing across the curriculum," and we knew from this literature and from common sense that students would be helped by this restructuring of the usual method. It's obvious how working through and succeeding at challenging written assignments in other courses might add to the student's feeling of confidence. What is not so obvious is that the support networks came into play here again, and became the catalysts for personal and academic growth. Students used the writing workshops to share knowledge of how to tackle complex tasks, of what pitfalls to avoid, of how to <u>really</u> manipulate the formats of research--and they even cut class to go to the library together to help each other do research and revisions of first drafts. The shared experience of writing came to focus for them the shared experience of their other courses and of the University and proved to be valuable beyond what we had envisioned. Our students--single parents, low-income people, minorities--came in the writing workshops to serve many of the same functions for each other that fraternity houses and sorority houses have served for generations of better-heeled students.

To further assist ICS students build both skills and self-confidence, we added a third structural change to the writing courses. Students had the chance to work with the same writing teacher all year, instead of just for a single-ten week quarter. For students distrustful of their abilities and fearful of the entire process of writing, such an opportunity was essential. The thirty-week time frame (really thirty-six, allowing for breaks between terms) allowed for time and trust, commodities too frequently missing in the ten-week writing courses of even the most patient and gentle writing teachers. Given thirty weeks, the instructor could take a longer view of progress, putting some skills on the back burner for developmental writers, allowing time for a necessary trust to build in the classroom. Students who began in the preparatory writing course in the fall quarter moved through the other two by the end of the year, completing the University's two-course Composition requirement with less trauma than many of their peers outside ICS. This may not seem like much of a change--or luxury--since in many small schools a student will stay with the same writing instructor all year routinely. But on our campus, with more students than many good sized cities have population, with three colleges offering freshman composition courses

1. See Elizabeth Douvan, "Capacity for Intimacy," in Chickering, pp. 191-211.

at the rate of nearly two hundred sections in some quarters, such a long-term association can make a major difference in acquiring this, the central enabling skill in the curriculum. When staffing writing courses in special services programs, it is important to use regular faculty whenever possible. Not only does this help insure long-term departmental commitment to new methods aimed at retaining students, it also frees the instructor to take some necessary liberties with the courses being offered, liberties which part-timers and outsiders might not and ought not feel free to take. While we were true to the basic General College writing laboratory courses in ICS, we stretched and bent them responsibly to fit the program's needs. To do that, an instructor has to know the course pretty well.

Sherry Read's presentation earlier showed that students made gains in self-esteem as a result of participating in the TRIO Integrated Course of Study. There is some research that shows that students who complete writing courses experience some similar growth in self-esteem, and our instincts would tell us that this is reasonable. But such a demonstrable growth in self-confidence as Read found among ICS students is especially interesting if we see it as an expression of students' increased feelings of mastery of tasks that had previously eluded them. Thomas F. Green points the way for us, and suggests why it might pay to go to some lengths in adapting writing classrooms to not only teach writing, but also consciously to build confidence as a pre-requisite for student retention:

> The statement 'I am good at Xing' entails the statement 'I am good.' And conversely, the statement 'I am good' entails the statement 'There is some kind of Xing at which I am good.' The point I wish to stress here is not the logical point that there is a relation between 'being competent' and 'being good' but the phenomenological point that the experience of one is the experience of the other. (Of course, the logical point is also important. It suggests, for example, that much of the research on the relation of self-concept to learning is fatuous, inasmuch as becoming competent at learning is the same thing as coming to have a favorable self-concept as learner.)

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> The development of competence in human beings requires a certain kind of world. It requires, first of all, the presence of a public within which it is possible to receive confirmation of one's competence and thus validation of one's worth.[1]

A carefully adapted writing classroom can become such a world. By integrating students of many levels of writing ability, by relying on peer groups in formation of support networks, by giving frequent supportive feedback to student work, and by promoting successful writing in other courses, the writing class can build and confirm student competence in writing, and thereby help instill the all-important feelings of self-worth that lead to success, both academic and personal.

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1. "Acquisition of Purpose," in Chickering, pp. 543-555.

URBAN PROBLEMS AND WRITING

by

Nathan Smith

We all know about Parkinson's Law. "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion." Today I am introducing Smith's Law. "Work contracts to fill the time available for its completion." When time and/or space is short, one must hasten through some of the more important elements in one's discourse or condense it to fit the available space. I would like to share my experience with an Urban Problems course and its coupling with a composition course, GC Writing Laboratory.

We were trying to induce students to improve their ability to perform research, organize their thoughts, deal with a problem and present their findings and conclusions in writing in a logical, coherent manner. My experience with students suggests that many of them write with a great deal of difficulty, while others have a great deal of difficulty in expressing themselves orally. I used my course, therefore, as a vehicle through which they were obliged to do these things in order to complete my course successfully.

In coordination with our composition staff, one of the things we required was a research paper. Since there is a research problem involved in completing a research paper we required them to perform a library assignment. I was not aware that anyone else at our University required a library assignment. It is more than simply a tour of the library. It includes a two-day instructional period and the completion of an assignment, the successful completion of which indicates student ability to use the card catalog, periodical indices, the government documents file and the other elements available in a large, modern library.

We also required a journal. I believe in the "do" approach. As John Dewey suggested, we learn by doing. Therefore, I required my students to do a great deal more writing, probably, than most historians require. In addition to the research paper, I required them to keep a journal. That journal was supposed to include the lectures, the reading they had done, and their own personal experiences that were relevant to what they had read and experienced in class. What I expected was some reference to the lectures and discussion, some reference to the reading, some reference to something they had read in a newspaper, in a magazine, heard on TV, heard in conversation - it didn't matter - integrated in such a way as to assure me that they understood what they had read and understood what had transpired in the classroom.

Nathan Smith is an Instructor in the Social Behavioral Sciences Division of the General College, University of Minnesota.

Those are the essential elements of our program. Now what in fact did it do? Well, I think it helped students lose their fear of using the library. Based on their comments, this is one of the goals they achieved from the course. It certainly helped them improve their writing. I have a paper which someday I'll publish, I think, which attempts to show that the students believed that they had performed better. The records we kept on the number of errors they made with those initial journals and the number they made at the end indicated that they had improved their ability to write more effectively with fewer errors. We also think that it helped them develop new interest in urban problems. We are an urban nation. If we cannot solve our urban problems, our nation may be in great jeopardy. The course enabled them to focus on a particular problem, analyze the measures taken to solve that problem, and draw appropriate conclusions, a very important competence in a democratic society.

This kind of combination can work in any course such as mine where writing can be required. Anyone who is concerned with assisting in the development of the "whole person" rather than simply specializing in one's own discipline should investigate the possibility of coupling one's course not only with a composition course but also an appropriate speech course. In that way, those skills which are the sine qua non of success in work or play--reading, writing and speaking effectively--will be developed along with knowledge of the subject matter being studied.

Survival Seminars

by

Beverly Stewart

The objective predominant in the TRIO Survival Seminars is basically that of the entire TRIO program: drawing a variety of educational resources together to provide an opportunity for new General College students to have a successful learning experience in their first year at the University. Therefore, a summary of what occurs within the Survival Seminars is also a reflection of what emerges from the project as a whole.

The Survival Seminars in TRIO are courses offered for two college credits which allow students to develop and utilize the skills and resources needed for educational achievement and progress in a college program. This portion of the Newsletter on the TRIO project will cover how the overall project and the Survival Seminars emphasize the integration of courses, counseling, and support which is received by participating students and staff.

Integration of Course Work and Counseling

Counseling is integrated with the courses in the TRIO program in much the same manner as are the writing course and the content courses. Counseling on a group basis is part of the Survival Seminar and individual counseling and follow-up with students is a natural extension of the class. Because the counselors teaching the seminars are assigned as advisers to the TRIO students, student progress can be evaluated quickly. Generally, on a campus of 50,000 students, advisers tend to receive progress reports about student performance the second or third week of the following quarter. Immediate class feedback concerning who is attending, what assignments are being handed in, who is having trouble, allows for early counseling intervention. Also, intervention is easier because the students interact with their advisers in the classroom rather than being introduced through a phone call. Not only do classmates help one another, but peer counselors also serve as an added resource. Students who were TRIO freshman the previous year sit in on the Survival Seminars and act as peer counselors for five new students.

The style of counseling used in the Seminars is one of advocacy - of helping the student adjust to the system and the system adjust to the student while maintaining the integrity of both. The TRIO students often feel different, alienated, and uncomfortable due to a lack of identity with many of the issues and other students on campus. Hence, counseling in a supportive manner and linking student with needed resources seems essential. Discussions occur about the expectations and responsibilities for students and staff; day to day needs such as money and day care must also be met. An attorney is available as part of the counseling and student services. A welfare advocate is also available. Tutors are accessible. Talking about the requirement of a research paper does little good if a single parent does not have the transportation or day care needed to utilize the library. Community resources must be made

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Beverely Stewart is a Counselor Advocate in the HELP Center program in the General College Student Affairs Division at the University of Minnesota.

available. The counseling style utilized depends upon whatever combination of techniques are needed to enable the individual to stay and produce positive results in school.

Course Content and Format

The format, style, and content of the Survival Seminars are designed to enable the student to benefit from traditional class learning opportunities at the University. The classes are two hours in length. The first hour involves traditional lecture/discussion with assigned readings, test, etc. The second hour, students are divided into small groups (5 to 8 per group). Counselors, peer-counselors, and students are active in experiential and participatory exercises. These exercises are based upon class content from the first hour or from issues relating to the other skills or courses the students are taking. Because much of the class is one of "doing", attendance is emphasized and tied to a portion of the grade. Attendance has been good, probably due to the expectation that being there is an essential part of completing class assignments. Sections of the Survival Seminars differ somewhat as students with similar issues (such as single parents) are often scheduled together. All sections include reading, test-taking, paper-writing, utilization of resources available within the University and community, financial aid information, details of University rules, career orientation, and student identity. Examples of the differing subjects requested for discussion by certain students are issues such as parenting, affirmative action, and decision-making processes.

Support Among Students and Staff

A sense of support, of experiencing together, of sharing ideas and resources is evident among the students, the staff members, and between students and staff. Students quickly begin studying together, working out transportation needs and pooling other ideas and resources. The students develop a home away from home attitude and support base through their day by day contacts with one another.

TRIO faculty meet regularly in order to share feedback about the positive and negative experiences they are having in their teaching and individual student contacts. At times there are disagreements concerning which philosophies of teaching and learning are most effective. Complete agreement may not always come about in faculty meetings but a synthesis of ideas does take place enabling the staff to work together in the best interests of the students and the program.

The interaction between the students and the staff is rewarding. Discussion time spent between classes, wine and cheese parties, recognition get-togethers, mutual questions and answer lead to the realization that students and staff are both interested in the learning experience they share.

In reviewing what makes both the Survival Seminar and the entire TRIO program come alive, one recognizes that focusing upon the success of integrating course-work and counseling and mutual support is necessary but is not the full answer. Another element which can result from a project such as TRIO is enthusiasm among the participants. The TRIO program "works" because its learners and teachers are excited, have fun, and are energized by making education a full and worthwhile experience.

THE INTEGRATED COURSE OF STUDY: ITS EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

by

Thomas Skovholt

The Integrated Course of Study (ICS) is a part of the TRIO/Special Services Program at the University of Minnesota. In this paper and subsequent papers in this series the Integrated Course of Study (ICS) will be described. The ICS is the most intense educational intervention of TRIO/Special Services at the General College, University of Minnesota. The focus of this paper is the educational environment of the ICS. Environmental highlights covered include a description of the University of Minnesota as a large educational institution, the conflicting demands faced by the General College of the University, and the internal structure of the ICS.

Special Services programs reside in a variety of institutional settings. In Winona, Minnesota, there are two liberal arts colleges and a state university that jointly sponsor a Special Services program, a Chicago community college of 4,000 students has a Specail Service Program, and a business college of 400 students in West Virginia has a program. Ours is different because it is part of one of the huge, midwestern, land grant universities like the universities of Wisconsin and Illinois, unknown in other parts of the country. New England has nothing like these huge educational factories. At Minnesota, there are 45,000-plus students on the Twin Cities campus, the largest single university in the country. The educational and credentializing mazes at Minnesota are complex, convoluted and rich. For example, buses transport students between three different locations for classes. There are three separate doctoral programs in social psychology. There are four totally separate programs where undergraduate composition is taught. The fall class schedule is as thick as a paperback dictionary. There are hundreds of academic counselors to explain all this to each other, and to students. The educational environment is like the buffet at an expensive restaurant, a tremendous assortment of delicious dishes. For new students who feel vulnerable about their intellectual ability it is also like driving on a very busy freeway for the first time, an overwhelmingly threatening experience. Within the complex, convoluted and rich mazes of the University of Minnesota lies General College, the home of our TRIO/Special Services Program.

General College started in 1932 in an attempt to provide educational and career solutions to the unemployment tragedies of the Great Depression. For 49 years it has been the educational Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty at the Universtiy of Minnesota. welcoming the unprepared and the unwanted to America's promise of equal opportunity through public education. General College acts an an advocate for these students in the larger University of Minnesota environment, an environment conceptualizes in very traditional terms where student victims are often blamed for their own "revolving door" behavior. Faculty and counselors in General College do savor the General College student success stories, those who they know

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in a private and personal way as well as the publicized ones - the next governor of Minnesota, it seems; a local, popular newsman; a Nobel Prize winner; the wealthy owner of the TV station. In a recent study of General College faculty values, social service ranked second of twenty-eight. I've often thought during this past year, our first year of the Special Services project, that General College, an undergraduate college of 3,000 students in this sea of 45,000-plus students, has been the nearly ideal Special Services site, because Special Services concepts, values, educational methods, are so institutionalized within the General College. That's a key word when you talk to TRIO program directors across the country, institutionalization of programs. Educational methods in General College have been institutionalized through 49 years of knowledge from practice. The counseling, advising and teaching approaches have been experimented with and refined for years and years while working with the unprepared and the unwanted. However, General College as a whole and the TRIO/Special Services program as a part exist amidst conflicting and contradictory occupational expectations. These expectations serve to both frustrate and stimulate faculty and staff work.

Faculty and staff work in an educational environment - the University of Minnesota - which demands the highest levels of intellectual achievement and prides itself on the unyielding nature of these demands. General College is part of this educational environment and General College faculty are proud of their own intellectual prowess. The same faculty, counselors and administrators have the special mission at the University of Minnesota of providing educational opportunities for students who have a background of marginal academic success. Consequently, the expectation of these General College staff members is to be master teachers; to communicate academic content lucidly and comprehensively and promote the intellectual development of educationally disadvantaged students. The horizontal axis of Figure 1 reveals the tension of these contradictory role expectations. On the vertical axis of Figure 1 is a conceptualization of student academic success or failure. In my view, University faculty tend to use one of these concepts and the continuum between them to inform their work as educators.

The statue hierarchy in higher education is essentially a uniform one across the United States. The students of status are those with high grades, test scores and rank in their class. The professors of most status are those who are most often gone from their own campus consulting and those with teaching responsibilities with limited numbers of advanced graduate students. As one teaches more students of a lower level, the status of the work is lowered.

As a function of educating large numbers of disadvantaged University students, General College faculty, counselors and administrators are enveloped by stigma and low statue. Stigmas are fascinating because they hold on like a tattoo and reduce all evidence to the common denominator of the stereotype (Goffman 1974). Our TRIO/Special Services Program is greater at this point of creative tension, between conflicting and contributing expectations of faculty and conflicting and contradictory attributions of student intellectual development.

The first year of our project was last year. There is a diagram I would like to show you that describes our program structure.

Figure 1

University of Minnesota Academic Environment

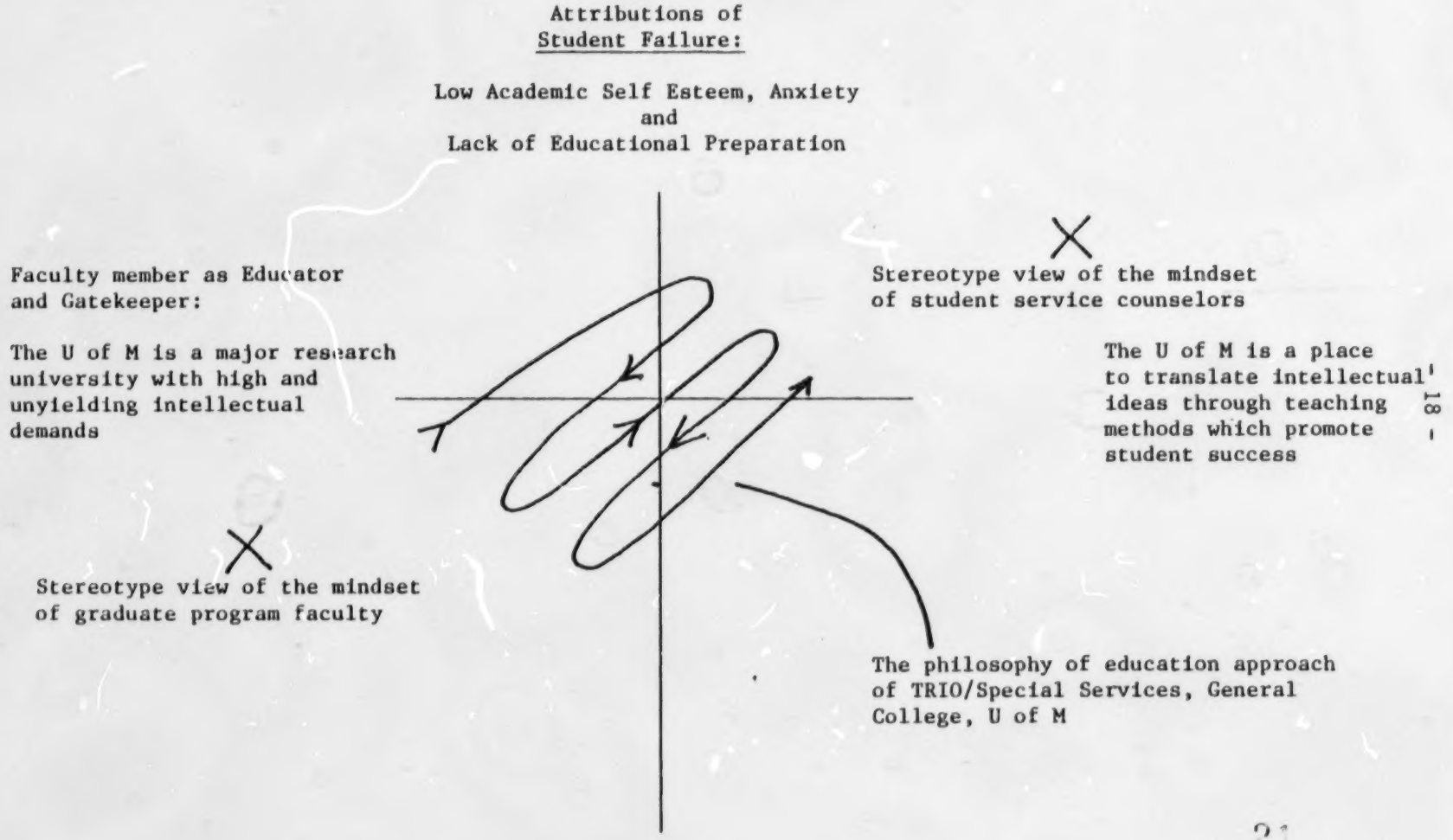
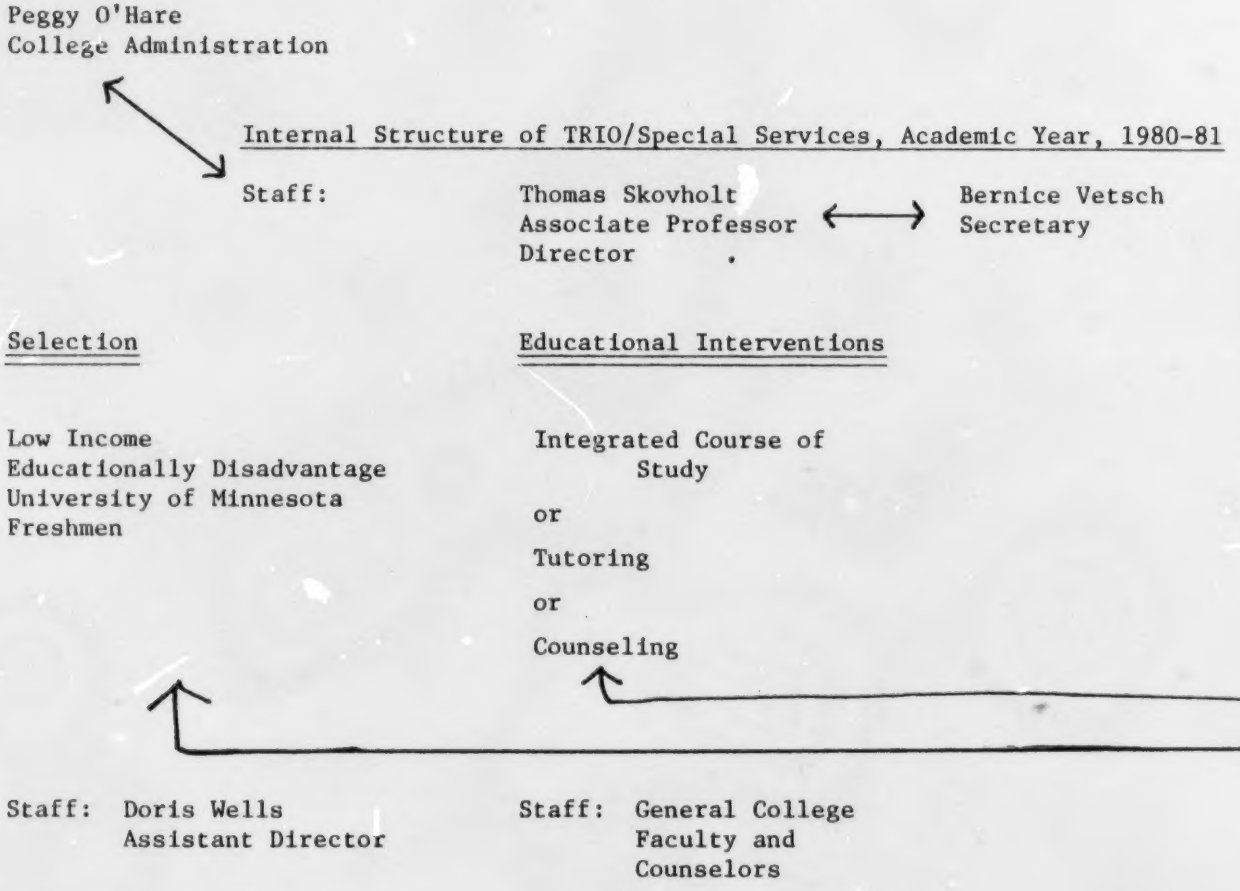

Attributions of
Student Failure:
Low Academic Self Esteem, Anxiety
and
Lack of Educational Preparation
Faculty member as Educator
and Gatekeeper:
The U of M is a major research university with high and unyielding intellectual demands
Stereotype view of the mindset of student service counselors
The U of M is a place to translate intellectual ideas through teaching methods which promote student success
Stereotype view of the mindset of graduate program faculty
The philosophy of education approach of TRIO/Special Services, General College, U of M
Sloth, Lack of Will and
Intellectual Inability

Figure 2


Peggy O'Hare
College Administration
Internal Structure of TRIO/Special Services, Academic Year, 1980-81
Staff:
Thomas Skovholt
Associate Professor
Director
Bernice Vetsch
Secretary
Selection
Educational Interventions
Evaluation
Low Income
Educationally Disadvantage
University of Minnesota
Freshmen
Integrated Course of Study
or
Tutoring
or
Counseling
Statistical
and Design Based
Psychological
Evaluation
Staff: Doris Wells
Assistant Director
Staff: General College
Faculty and
Counselors
Staff:
Sherry Read
Evaluator

In selection, we have keyed on the beginning freshman students coming into this huge place and tried to use the grant funds to keep them going for one year. After one year, the students enter the mainstream of General College. Eventually many of these students will transfer to other units of the larger University.

Figure 3 describes the three separate components of TRIO/Special Services; the Integrated Course of Study, our focus in this article, Counseling through one of two offices, the H.E.L.P. Center or Counseling and Student Development, and Tutoring through the Reading and Study Skills Center.

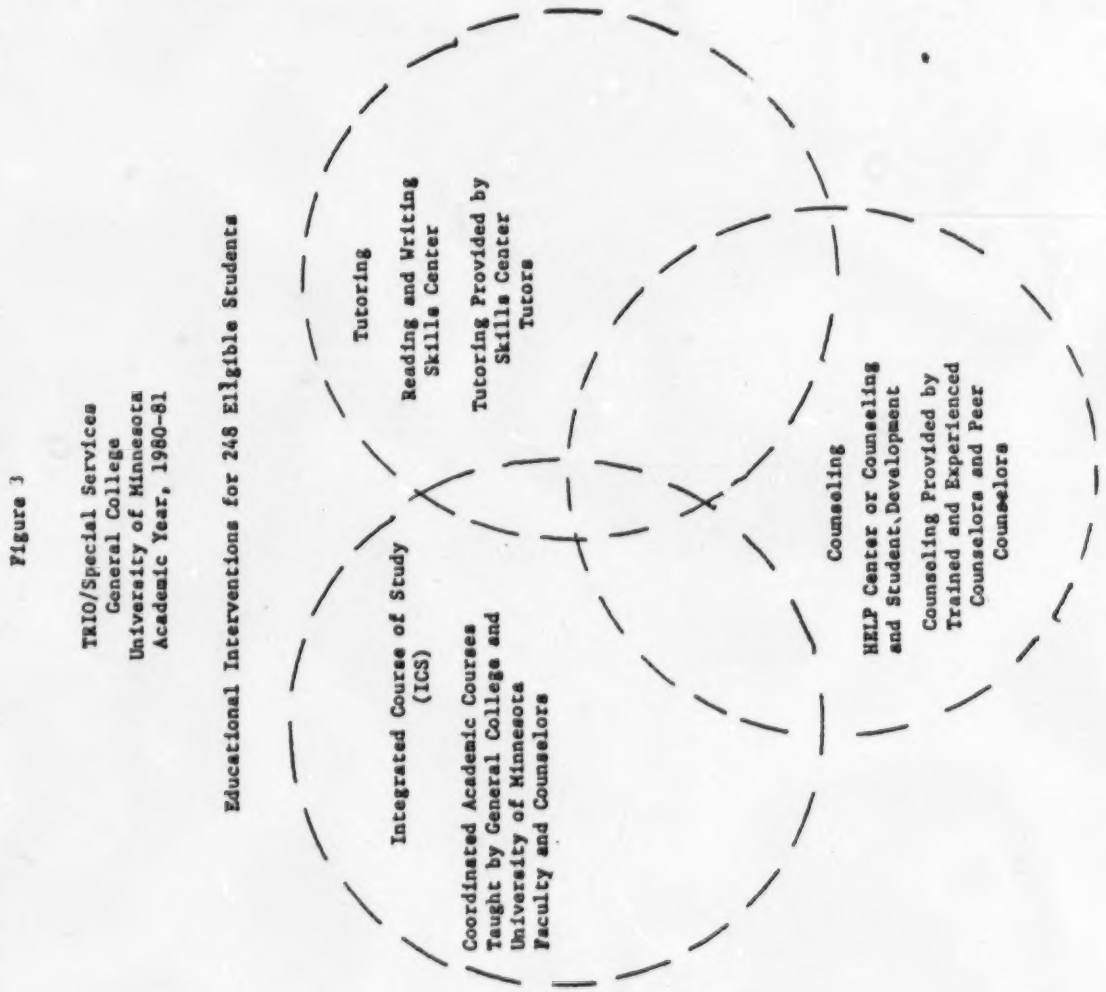


Figure 3
TRIO/Special Services
General College
University of Minnesota
Academic Year, 1980-81
Educational Interventions for 248 Eligible Students
Tutoring
Reading and Writing Skills Center
Tutoring Provided by Skills Center Tutors
Integrated Course of Study (ICS)
Coordinated Academic Courses Taught by General College and University of Minnesota Faculty and Counselors
Counseling
HELP Center or Counseling and Student Development
Counseling Provided by Trained and Experienced Counselors and Peer Counselors

In summary, the Integrated Course of Study exists in the midst of a sea of 45,000-plus students and the complex, convoluted and rich educational environment of the land grant University of Minnesota. Our focus is on the first year of college and its intellectual and personal stressors for new students. Ultimately, the hope is to mute the "revolving door" experience common to bypassed and disadvantaged individuals who enroll with great hope and fear at the University of Minnesota.